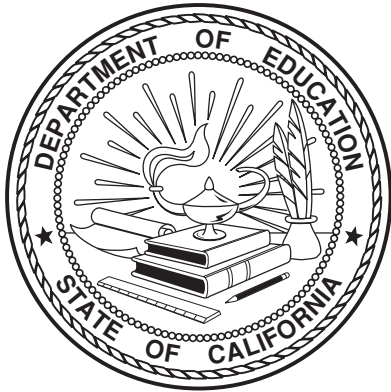


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# Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program

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## 2005 STAR Program

Pretest Information for  
Parents and Guardians

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Assistance Packet for  
School Districts and Schools

March 2005

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# Introduction

**T**he Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program is the cornerstone of the California assessment system. The STAR Program is designed primarily to help measure how well students are achieving the California academic standards in English-language arts, mathematics, history-social science, and science. All students in grades two through eleven must participate in the STAR Program testing each spring, including students with disabilities and English learners.

The STAR Program for 2005 has four components:

- The *California Standards Tests (CSTs)* were developed for California public schools to assess state-adopted academic standards.
- The *California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)* was developed for California public school students with significant cognitive disabilities who are not able to take the *CSTs* and the *CAT/6 Survey* even with accommodations or modifications.
- The *California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey)*, administered in grades three and seven only, are nationally norm-referenced tests that measure the achievement of basic academic skills and provide national comparisons.
- The *Spanish Assessment of Basic Education, Second Edition (SABE/2)*, is a nationally norm-referenced achievement test of basic skills in Spanish for Spanish-speaking English learners.

## Purpose of Assistance Packet for Parents and Guardians

The purpose of the *STAR 2005 Program: Pretest Information for Parents and Guardians – Assistance Packet for School Districts and Schools* is to assist school district and school administrators and staffs in their efforts to inform parents and guardians about the STAR Program for 2005. The communication materials included are designed to ensure that parents and guardians understand which tests in the STAR Program are appropriate for their children, the content tested, and the types of questions students are asked. The materials also communicate to parents and guardians about the use of STAR Program results for:

- Providing yearly information about their children's progress
- Enhancing communication and collaboration between parents and guardians and teachers to improve student learning

The resources in this packet are intended to support a variety of communication activities that may be used by school districts and schools to inform parents and guardians. A new component in this packet is the "Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program: What's New in 2005" that summarizes changes in the program for 2005 and beyond. Another helpful component in this packet is the "STAR 2005 Program-at-a-Glance for Parents and Guardians" on pages 28–30. Each chart summarizes the STAR Program on one page by grade span (elementary, middle, or high school). The updated packet also includes questions and answers about the STAR Program, a series of newsletter inserts, sample principal letters, a sample brochure, and suggestions to school districts and schools for using the materials provided.

# Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program

## What's New in 2005

### Reauthorization

Senate Bill 1448, approved by the Legislature and the Governor in August 2004, reauthorized the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program with some changes, including:

- The STAR Program is extended through January 1, 2011 in grades three through eleven. STAR Program testing in grade two will be extended to the 2006–07 school year (spring 2007 administration).
- The *California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey)*, will be reduced to grades three and seven, beginning with the 2004–05 school year (spring 2005 administration).
- Primary language tests in Spanish must be developed and/or adopted by the California Department of Education (CDE) that are aligned to the state academic standards for English-language arts and mathematics. This test development is to begin with grade two for administration in spring 2007.

### Released CST Questions

- Released *California Standards Test (CST)* questions from the 2004 administration were posted in December 2004 on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>.
- Released questions are to be used in conjunction with the *Guidelines on Academic Preparation for State Assessments*. These guidelines are posted on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa>.

## New Tests in Science

New tests in science, required by federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, will be field tested in grades eight and ten in the spring of 2005 as follows:

- The *NCLB Grade Eight Science Test* will assess the grade eight science standards. The *NCLB High School Life Science Test*, administered in grade ten, will assess selected middle school life science standards and selected high school biology standards.
- In addition to the *NCLB High School Life Science Test*, some grade ten students will also take a *CST* in science if they will complete a standards-based course during the 2004–05 school year.
- Students in grade eight, with significant cognitive disabilities, will take the *California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)* field test of science performance tasks in spring 2005. A student's individualized education program indicates whether the student takes the *CST* or the *CAPA*.

# Suggested Uses for Parent and Guardian Information Materials

**S**uggestions for using, combining, or adapting the information materials provided in this packet are outlined on pages 6 and 7. In order to facilitate the use of suggested documents, text-only versions of these materials can be downloaded from the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>. Most of the assistance materials include spaces within parentheses to allow for local information. Spanish versions of most of these materials will be posted on the Web site as soon as they are completed.

In addition to the assistance materials included in this packet, more information and resources about the STAR Program are available on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr>. If further information is needed, contact the Standards and Assessment Division of the CDE at (916) 445-8765 (phone), at (916) 319-0969 (fax), or at [STAR@cde.ca.gov](mailto:STAR@cde.ca.gov) (e-mail).

# Suggested Uses for Parent and Guardian Information Materials

Document	Description	Suggested Uses	Suggested Distribution Dates
Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program: What's New in 2005 (pages 3–4)	Provides a summary of the key changes in the STAR Program for 2005 and beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insert in the school/home newsletter</li> <li>■ Attach to a principal letter to parents and guardians</li> <li>■ Distribute copies at parent/guardian workshops and meetings</li> <li>■ Provide copies to teachers to distribute to parents or guardians at conferences and other meeting opportunities</li> <li>■ Post copies in the main school office or on bulletin boards</li> <li>■ Post copies on the school district/school Web site</li> </ul>	Multiple and regular distributions prior to and throughout STAR Program testing
Question and Answer Documents (pages 8–15)	Three documents providing answers to questions frequently asked by parents and guardians about the 2005 STAR Program, the California Reading List (CRL), and the Early Assessment Program (EAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insert in the school/home newsletter</li> <li>■ Attach to a principal letter to parents and guardians</li> <li>■ Distribute copies at parent/guardian workshops and meetings</li> <li>■ Provide copies for teachers and counselors to share with students and their parents or guardians at conferences and other meeting opportunities</li> <li>■ Attach copies to regular communications to parents and guardians (i.e., lunch menus, weekly home packets, and PTA communications)</li> <li>■ Post on the school district/school Web site or distribute through list serve to parents and guardians</li> </ul>	<p>Multiple and regular distributions prior to and throughout STAR Program testing</p> <p>A handout to use as needed to assist parents and guardians in understanding the tests in the STAR Program and the reports they will receive at the end of the summer</p>
Spotlight on STAR 2005 (Series of articles for school/home newsletters, pages 16–27)	Series of six articles that describe the STAR Program and provide answers to many of the questions asked by parents and guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Include inserts (or sections of the inserts) in separate school/home newsletters or combine topics, as appropriate</li> <li>■ Use inserts in student newspapers at appropriate grades</li> <li>■ Attach copies to regular communications to parents and guardians (i.e., lunch menus, weekly home packets, and PTA communications)</li> <li>■ Post copies in the main school office or on bulletin boards</li> <li>■ Post on the school district/school Web site or distribute through list serve to parents and guardians</li> </ul>	Monthly, through the end of the school year



# Suggested Uses for Parent and Guardian Information Materials

Document	Description	Suggested Uses	Suggested Distribution Dates
STAR 2005 Program-at-a-Glance for Parents and Guardians (pages 28–30)	Chart for each grade span (elementary, middle, and high school) that gives concise, comprehensive information about the tests that comprise the STAR Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insert in the school/home newsletter</li> <li>■ Attach to a principal letter to parents and guardians</li> <li>■ Attach to the "Helping Your Children Achieve" brochure</li> <li>■ Make transparencies or copies for presentations to parents and guardians</li> <li>■ Enlarge and post in the main office and other locations where parents and guardians and staff can read the information</li> <li>■ Post on bulletin boards where students can read the information</li> <li>■ Attach copies to regular communications to parents and guardians (i.e., lunch menus, weekly home packets, and PTA communications)</li> <li>■ Post on the school district/school Web site or distribute through list serve to parents and guardians</li> </ul>	<p>Multiple and regular distributions prior and up to the beginning of STAR Program testing</p> <p>A handout to use as needed to assist parents and guardians in understanding the tests in the STAR Program and the reports they will receive at the end of summer</p>
Sample Principal's Letter Before STAR Program Testing Begins (pages 31–32)	Announces STAR Program testing dates to parents and guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Add local STAR Program testing dates (including make-up dates) and contact information to the sample letter</li> <li>■ Attach the appropriate "STAR 2005 Program-at-a-Glance for Parents and Guardians"</li> <li>■ Post on the school district/school Web site or distribute through list serve for parents and guardians</li> </ul>	Prior to STAR Program testing
Sample Principal's Letter Before CAPA Testing Begins (page 33)	Announces STAR Program testing dates for CAPA to parents and guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Add local CAPA testing dates (including make-up dates) and contact information to the sample letter</li> <li>■ Attach the appropriate "STAR 2005 Program-at-a-Glance for Parents and Guardians"</li> <li>■ Post on the school district/school Web site or distribute through list serve for parents and guardians</li> </ul>	Prior to CAPA testing
Helping Your Children Achieve (Brochure,* pages 34–35)	Emphasizes the importance of involvement of parents and guardians in their children's education and gives practical suggestions for helping children at home with reading, writing, and mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide copies to teachers to distribute at parent/guardian-teacher conferences</li> <li>■ Distribute copies at parent/guardian information meetings</li> <li>■ Use at parent/guardian education workshops</li> <li>■ Copy as part of school/home newsletters</li> <li>■ Attach copies to regular communications to parents and guardians (i.e., lunch menus, weekly home packets, and PTA communications)</li> <li>■ Post on the school district/school Web site</li> </ul>	Throughout the year

\* Through use of the MS Word text that is provided for all documents in this packet, the brochure format can be changed to a one-page document or a single-fold brochure.

## Questions and Answers About the 2005 STAR Program

### ***What is the STAR Program?***

The Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program is an important part of the state testing system. Administered annually in the spring, the STAR Program was authorized in 1997 by state law (*Education Code Section 60640*) to measure how well students are acquiring the knowledge and skills identified in the California academic standards.

The STAR Program includes four test components:

- The *California Standards Tests (CSTs)* were developed for California public schools and are aligned to the state academic standards.
- The *California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)* was developed for California public school students who have significant cognitive disabilities and cannot take the *CSTs* and *CAT/6 Survey* even with accommodations or modifications.
- The *California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition (CAT/6 Survey)*, administered in grades three and seven only, are nationally norm-referenced tests that measure the achievement of basic academic knowledge academic skills and provide national comparisons.
- The *Spanish Assessment of Basic Education, Second Edition (SABE/2)*, is a nationally norm-referenced achievement test of basic skills in Spanish for Spanish-speaking English learners.

### ***Who takes the STAR Program tests?***

All students in grades two through eleven take the STAR Program tests, including students with disabilities and students who are English learners. Spanish-speaking English learners, who have been enrolled in California public schools less than 12 months, must take the *SABE/2* in addition to the tests administered in English (*Education Code Section 60640*). Only students whose parents or guardians have submitted written requests to exempt them from STAR Program testing do not take any tests (*Education Code Section 60615*).

Most students with disabilities take the STAR Program tests along with all other students under standard conditions. Some students with disabilities may require testing variations, accommodations, and/or modifications to be able to take the tests. These are listed in the *Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments*, which is available on the California Department of Education (CDE) Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>.

Test variations are allowed for any student who regularly uses them in the classroom. Accommodations and modifications must be specified in each student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. The IEPs for students with significant cognitive disabilities, who are unable to take the CSTs or CAT/6 Survey even with accommodations or modifications, specify that they are to take the CAPA.

English learners may have access to translation glossaries or word lists (English-to-primary language) that do not include definitions or formulas. They also may have the test directions translated for them and ask clarifying questions in their own language. Students who are English learners may be tested separately if such a setting is part of the regular classroom instruction or assessments. These variations are described on the last page of the *Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California Statewide Assessments*.

Student STAR Program results must be reported to parents or guardians within 20 working days after the school district receives them. STAR Program reports usually are mailed to the student's home address. Group results by grade level for each school, school district, county, and the state are to be posted on the Internet no later than August 15, 2005.

***What is done to assist students with disabilities?***

***What is done to assist students who are English learners?***

***When do parents or guardians get their child's results?***

***Can results from the STAR Program be used to determine if a student should be retained?***

A school district may use the STAR Program results to help make decisions about student placement, promotion, retention, or other considerations related to student achievement. These test scores should never be used by themselves to make such important decisions. School districts also should consider local assessments, classroom tests, grades, and teacher recommendations in making these decisions.

***Can parents or guardians excuse their child from the STAR Program tests?***

Yes. *Education Code* Section 60615 allows a parent or guardian to excuse his or her child from the STAR Program tests. This request must be made in writing and submitted prior to the first day of testing.

***Can parents or guardians request to see the STAR Program tests?***

By law (*Education Code* Section 60616), the STAR Program tests are secure tests and cannot be seen by anyone other than the parties specified by law (school board members, legislators). This stipulation helps maintain the integrity of the tests and ensures that the rights of all students are protected. A portion of the test questions used in the CSTs is released each year and posted on the Internet for public viewing. The released questions illustrate the content and types of questions that are included in the CST portion of the STAR Program. These released questions are available on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>.

***Do STAR Program results go on a student's high school transcript?***

No. Student results for tests in the STAR Program do not go on the high school transcript unless a parent or guardian signs a release or submits a written request to do so (*Education Code* Section 60641).

***How can schools help prepare students for the STAR Program tests?***

The best preparation for the STAR Program tests is to provide classroom instruction and assessments that are aligned with the California academic standards. Parents and guardians are encouraged to talk with their children's teachers about what the school district, school, and teachers are doing to ensure that the academic standards are being taught and assessed.

# Questions and Answers About the California Reading List (CRL)

The California Reading List (CRL) is a Web-based tool that gives students and their parents or guardians access to collections of book titles organized by levels of reading difficulty. A CRL number identifies a list of books that is appropriate for a student's independent reading level. Each list includes books that cover a range of genres (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, plays, poetry), subjects, and interests.

The CRL number is included on the STAR Student Report that is sent to parents and guardians annually with individual results of the *California Standards Tests (CSTs)* and *California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey)*.<sup>\*</sup> This number is derived from the student's score on the *CST in English-Language Arts*, which is a component of the STAR Program. The CRL number is printed on the lower left side of the back page of the STAR Student Report.

No. The CRL numbers, which range from 01 to 13+, correspond to each of thirteen book lists on the Web site. The numbers indicate a progression in the level of difficulty of the reading selections, with CRL 01 indicating the easiest to read books and CRL 13+ indicating the most difficult texts. Multiple book lists are available for each grade level.

The CRL can be accessed only on the Internet at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/readinglist.asp>. The specific list for a student and other information about the books on this list (e.g., author, classification, summary) can be viewed on or printed from this site.

When parents or guardians access the CRL, they first are prompted to identify their child's grade. Next, the CRL number from the STAR Student Report is selected. With these two pieces of information, a list of books that match a child's grade and CRL number is generated. Words or phrases also can be entered in the Keywords box to narrow the search.

<sup>\*</sup> The CAT/6 Survey will be given in grades three and seven only.

***What is the California Reading List?***

***Where can I find the CRL number for my child?***

***Is the CRL number related to grade level?***

***Where is the CRL on the Web site?***

***How do I know which list is appropriate for my child?***

Once a list of books is generated, a parent or guardian can click on the book icon to find more information about each book, including its availability, type of book, and a brief summary of the content. Some books are designated as NP. This means that at least half of the book is comprised of nonstandard prose. Some examples are poems, plays, songs, and books with incorrect or no punctuation.

All of this information is designed to help families decide which books on the list are most appropriate for their children. In making this decision, parents or guardians should take into consideration their child's interests, independent reading ability, motivation, and level of maturity.

***How can the CRL help my child?***

Reading and literacy skills are keys to lifelong learning. The more students read, the better readers they become and the better they perform in school. The CRL helps determine which books are appropriate for children to read outside of school. Parents or guardians can help their children become better readers by encouraging them to read as much as possible.

***I cannot find my child's STAR Student Report. Can I use the information on the CRL site?***

Yes. It is recommended that parents or guardians work with their child's teacher(s) to help determine the list appropriate for each child.

# Questions and Answers About the Early Assessment Program (EAP)

Started in the spring of 2004, the Early Assessment Program (EAP) is a partnership between the California State University (CSU) system, the California Department of Education, and the State Board of Education. The EAP assessments are administered with the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program and are designed to provide information about the readiness of grade eleven students for college-level English and mathematics.

Participation in the EAP is voluntary and does not require any separate registration procedure. Grade eleven students may participate in the EAP for English by completing the 15 additional multiple-choice questions found in the *Grade Eleven California Standards Test (CST) in English-Language Arts* booklet and by writing an essay. Grade eleven students who are taking the *CSTs in Algebra II* or *Summative High School Mathematics* may participate in the EAP for mathematics by completing 15 additional multiple-choice questions in these *CST* booklets. Grade twelve students are not eligible to participate in the EAP.

All grade eleven students who complete the *Grade Eleven CST in English-Language Arts* and the *CSTs in Algebra II* or *Summative High School Mathematics* are encouraged to participate in the EAP if they are planning to apply to a CSU campus. The information from this test can benefit students in the following ways:

- The results provide an early indication of whether a student is ready for college-level English and mathematics.
- The results tell students if they need to take additional coursework or adjust their classes in grade twelve in order to be better prepared for college.

***What is the Early Assessment Program?***

***How can a student participate in the EAP?***

***Should a student participate in the EAP?***



- The EAP results may exempt a student from the CSU placement tests.
- The EAP is not an indicator of CSU admissions or eligibility. Participating in the EAP cannot negatively affect a student's CSU admission or eligibility.

(For more information about CSU admission requirements, visit the CSU Web site at <http://www.calstate.edu/admission/admission.shtml> or [http://www.csumentor.edu/planning/high\\_school/subjects.asp](http://www.csumentor.edu/planning/high_school/subjects.asp).)

### ***How are the results for the EAP reported?***

The EAP results are reported separately for English (English-language arts) and mathematics:

The EAP results in English are based on the 15 EAP multiple-choice questions, selected questions from the *Grade Eleven CST in English-Language Arts*, and the EAP essay. These combined results are reported in two ways:

**Exempt:** This indicates that the student scored high enough to be considered exempt from taking the *CSU English Placement Test (EPT)*.

**Non-Exempt:** The student did not score high enough to be exempt from the *EPT* and needs additional instruction in grade twelve to prepare for the *EPT* and college-level English.

The EAP results in mathematics are based on the 15 EAP multiple-choice questions and selected questions from the *CSTs in Algebra II* or *Summative High School Mathematics*. These combined results are reported in three ways:

**Exempt:** This indicates that the student scored high enough to be considered exempt from taking the *CSU Entry Level Mathematics (ELM)* placement test.



**Conditionally Exempt:** This indicates that by successfully completing an approved mathematics experience in grade twelve the student will be exempt from the *ELM*. If the student does not do any additional coursework and is not exempt on the basis of the tests required for college admissions (i.e., *SAT*, *ACT*, *Advanced Placement*), the student will have to take and pass the *ELM*.

**Non-Exempt:** The student did not score high enough to be exempt or conditionally exempt from the *ELM*. The student needs additional instruction in grade twelve to prepare for the *ELM* and college-level mathematics.

A description of approved experiences for grade twelve students who receive conditionally exempt status in mathematics is available at [http://www.csumathsuccess.org/senior\\_experience\\_options](http://www.csumathsuccess.org/senior_experience_options). Students must enroll in and successfully complete (i.e., grade C or better, unless otherwise specified) one of these experiences.

The EAP results are sent to school districts in a report that is separate from the STAR Student Report. School districts are expected to receive results in August. Results will then be distributed to parents.

Grade eleven students who voluntarily complete the EAP questions may indicate on their answer documents that they want their test results to be released directly to the CSU system.

*What are approved experiences for grade twelve students who receive conditionally exempt status on the EAP in mathematics?*

*How does my child get his or her EAP results?*

*How does the CSU system get my child's EAP results?*



# Spotlight on STAR 2005

STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) PROGRAM

## What Is the STAR Program? When Does It Happen?

**S**tudents at our school will participate again this spring in the California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. The STAR Program, an important part of the California assessment system for students in grades two through eleven, was initially authorized by state law (Senate Bill 376) in 1997. In 2004, the STAR Program was reauthorized until 2011.

The purpose of the STAR Program is to measure how well students are learning the knowledge

and skills identified in the California academic standards. The academic standards describe what students at each grade level should know and be able to do in English-language arts, mathematics, history-social science, and science.

Students in grades two through eleven participate in the STAR Program in the spring of each year. The STAR Program includes four test components that students at our school will take on the dates listed in the table below.

2005 STAR Program Tests	Administration Date(s)	Make-Up Date(s)
<i>California Standards Tests (CSTs)</i> <i>Grade (insert grade) California Writing Standards Test</i> <i>California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)</i> <i>California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey) — Grade (insert grade)</i> <i>Spanish Assessment of Basic Education, Second Edition (SABE/2)</i>		

# Spotlight on STAR 2005

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## STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) PROGRAM

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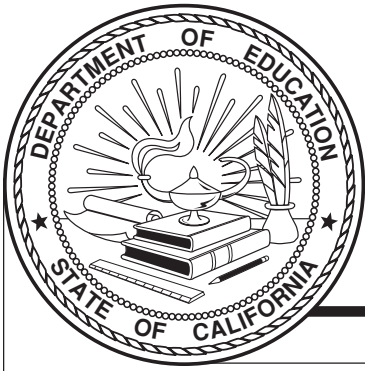
### What Is the STAR Program? When Does It Happen?

Most students in grades two through eleven will take the *California Standards Tests (CSTs)*. Students in grades three and seven also will take the *California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey)*, which will be part of the same test booklet as the *CSTs*.

Students with significant cognitive disabilities, who are unable to take the *CSTs* and the *CAT/6 Survey*, will participate in the STAR Program by taking the *California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)*. The *CSTs*, *CAT/6 Survey*,

and *CAPA* are given in English. Spanish-speaking students enrolled in California public schools less than 12 months also will take the *Spanish Assessment of Basic Education, Second Edition (SABE/2)*, which is administered in Spanish.

If you have any questions about the California academic standards or STAR Program, please direct them to your child's teacher or school office.



# Spotlight on STAR 2005

STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) PROGRAM

## Why More Than One Test?

The California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program includes four test components that provide different information for different purposes. These tests are the *California Standards Tests (CSTs)*; the *California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)*; the *California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey)*; and the *Spanish Assessment of Basic Skills, Second Edition (SABE/2)*.

### **CSTs—Aligned to State Standards**

Most students will take the *CSTs*, one set of tests that form the cornerstone of the STAR Program. Given in English, they are designed to show how well students are doing with respect to the California academic standards. These academic standards, approved by the State Board of Education, describe what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. Students in grades two through eleven are tested in English-language arts and mathematics. In addition, students in grades five, nine, ten, and eleven take a science test, and students in

grades eight, ten, and eleven are tested in history-social science.

Science questions, designed to meet federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements, are being field tested this year in grades eight and ten.

### **CAPA—Assessing Students with Significant Disabilities**

The *CAPA* is taken by students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the *CSTs* and *CAT/6 Survey* even with accommodations or modifications. This test assesses how well students have achieved a subset of California academic standards in English-language arts, mathematics, and science.

### **CAT/6 Survey—Compared to Nation**

Students in grades three and seven will also take the *CAT/6 Survey* tests that assess the achievement of basic academic skills in key subjects that are commonly taught in public schools throughout

# Spotlight on STAR 2005

## STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) PROGRAM

### Why More Than One Test?

the United States. The *CAT/6 Survey* tests allow us to compare the performance of California students to the performance of students throughout the nation. In grades three and seven, *CAT/6 Survey* tests are administered within the same test booklet as the *CSTs*.

### **SABE/2—Assessing English Learners**

The *SABE/2*, given in Spanish, tests knowledge and skills in key subject areas. The *SABE/2* allows the achievement of Spanish-speaking English learners to be compared with the achievement of a national sample of Spanish-speaking students.

### **Monitoring Academic Achievement**

The STAR Program ensures that information about the academic achievement of all students is collected on a regular basis. This information is critical in evaluating the quality of the education provided for California students. In order to ensure that schools have the most complete information possible, all students need to be tested. By having multiple tests, all students are given the opportunity to participate in the STAR Program.

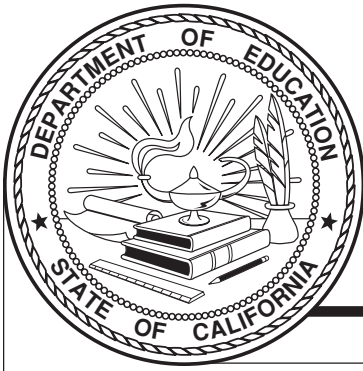
### **Different Purposes**

The test components that make up the STAR Program provide results that can be used for different purposes. Test results:

- Provide parents and guardians with information about their children's progress.
- Are a tool for helping parents, guardians, and teachers work together to improve student learning.
- Help school districts and schools identify strengths and areas that need improvement in their educational programs.
- Allow the public and policymakers to hold public schools accountable for student learning.

STAR Program test results, along with other available information, help school staffs form a more complete picture of their students' academic achievement.

If you have any questions about the California academic standards or STAR Program, please direct them to your child's teacher or school office.



# Spotlight on STAR 2005

STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) PROGRAM

## What Types of Questions Are on the Tests?

The Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program tests contain multiple-choice questions, writing tasks, or performance tasks.\* The table below outlines the types of test questions found on each STAR Program test.

Students mark their answer choices in the test booklet for grades two and three and on an answer document for grades four through eleven. All multiple-choice questions are machine scored.

2005 STAR Program Tests	Type of Questions
<i>California Standards Tests (CSTs)</i>	Multiple choice Writing tasks (grades four and seven)
<i>California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)</i>	Performance tasks
<i>California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey)</i>	Multiple choice
<i>Spanish Assessment of Basic Education, Second Edition (SABE/2)</i>	Multiple choice

### Writing Tasks

For the *CST in English-Language Arts*, students in grades four and seven answer multiple-choice questions and write a composition or essay in response to a writing task (prompt). Students in grade four may be asked to write a narrative (story), a response to literature, or a summary

### Multiple-Choice Questions

Most of the questions in the tests that make up the STAR Program are presented in a multiple-choice format. This means students are presented with a question and asked to select the correct answer from four or five possible choices.

of an article. Students in grade seven may be asked to write a fictional or autobiographical narrative, a response to literature, a persuasive essay, or a summary of an article. Each student essay is scored by trained readers. (The criteria used to score the student essays are in the *California Standards Test Teacher Guide for the*

\* Performance tasks are included only in the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA).

# Spotlight on STAR 2005

## STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) PROGRAM

### What Types of Questions Are on the Tests?

*2003 California Writing Standards Tests at Grades Four and Seven* available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/documents/writingguide04.pdf>.) The essay scores are combined with the scores from the multiple-choice questions to produce the student's overall *CST in English-Language Arts* score.

All multiple-choice questions and writing tasks for the *CSTs* are aligned to the California academic standards and have been tried out on students throughout the state. The *CST* blueprints identify the specific academic standards tested. These blueprints are available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/blueprints.asp>.

### **CAPA Performance Tasks**

Students taking the *CAPA* respond to performance tasks based on a subset of the California academic standards in English-language arts, mathematics, and science. The *CAPA* is individually administered. An examiner directs the student to respond to a question or to perform a task. The examiner then observes and records the student's response.

### **Security for Fairness**

Parents and guardians cannot see the tests in the STAR Program because of security reasons. Test questions are seen only by students when they take the tests. These security measures ensure that the tests are fair for all students and that test questions can be used for more than one year.

If you have any questions about the California academic standards or STAR Program, please direct them to your child's teacher or school office.





# Spotlight on STAR 2005

STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) PROGRAM

## How Do We Help Students Who Need Special Assistance?

All students participate in the STAR Program, including students with disabilities and English learners. Most students with disabilities and English learners take the *California Standards Tests (CSTs)* under standard conditions. If these students are in grade three or seven, they also take the *California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey)* under standard conditions.

Some students with disabilities and English learners, however, may need assistance when taking the tests. This assistance takes the form of test variations, accommodations, or modifications. All students may have test administration directions simplified or clarified. And all eligible students may have test variations if they are regularly used in the classroom. Accommodations change the way that the test is given but do not change what is tested. Modifications fundamentally change what is being tested. The purpose of test variations, accommodations, and modifications is to enable the students to take the tests, not to give them an advantage over other students or to improve their scores.

### Students With Disabilities

Students with disabilities who need special assistance may take the STAR tests with test variations. They also must be allowed to use the accommodations and modifications that are specified in each student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. These accommodations and/or modifications must match the one(s) used for classroom work throughout the year.

Following are descriptions of the types of test variations, accommodations, and modifications available in the STAR Program for students with disabilities. A student's IEP team may specify that a student with significant cognitive disabilities is not able to take the *CSTs* and the *CAT/6 Survey* tests with accommodations or modifications and, therefore, should take the *California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)*.

Test variations, accommodations, and modifications for the statewide assessments, including the STAR Program, have been organized into the following categories:



# Spotlight on STAR 2005

## STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) PROGRAM

### How Do We Help Students Who Need Special Assistance?

#### Category 1: Test Variations

Eligible students may have test variations if regularly used in the classroom. For example, students may be tested in a smaller group or separately, have special lighting or adaptive furniture, or use magnifying equipment.

#### Category 2: Accommodations

Eligible students shall be permitted to take the test with accommodations if specified in the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan for use on the CSTs, standardized tests, or for use during classroom instruction and assessment. Examples of accommodations are large-print or Braille versions of the tests or providing more than one day for a test designed for a single sitting.

#### Category 3: Modifications

Eligible students shall be permitted to take the tests with modifications if specified in the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan for use on the CSTs, standardized tests, or for use during classroom instruction and assessment. Examples of modifications include an examiner reading the reading test to the student or a student using a calculator to perform computations on the mathematics test.

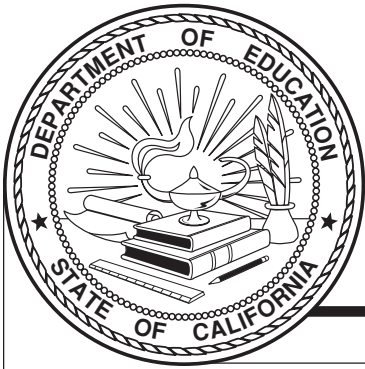
#### English Learners

Students who are English learners may have certain test variations if these variations are regularly used in the classroom (i.e., a translation glossary or word list). English learners with an IEP or Section 504 Plan may use accommodations or modifications that are written into that plan.

#### Additional Information

The *Matrix of Test Variations, Accommodations, and Modifications for Administration of California State-wide Assessments* provides a complete list of the variations, accommodations, and modifications that are allowed under the STAR Program. This matrix is posted on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>.

If you have any questions about the California academic standards or STAR Program, please direct them to your child's teacher or school office.



# Spotlight on STAR 2005

STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) PROGRAM

## What Kinds of Score Reports Will Parents and Guardians Receive?

All parents and guardians of students who participate in the STAR Program will receive at least one score report that shows how well their students are meeting the academic standards for each subject tested. The school district sends the STAR Program results (usually by mail) to each student's home within 20 working days after the school district receives the reports. This mailing date may be different for each school district; however, parents and guardians should receive their students' results no later than October 7.

### Separate Reports Provided

Parents and guardians receive the *California Standards Tests (CSTs)* results in a STAR Student Report. For students in grades three and seven, test results for the *California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey)* are included on the same report. The *California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)* results are sent in a separate STAR Student Report (CAPA version).

Parents and guardians of students who take the *Spanish Assessment of Basic Education, Second Edition (SABE/2)* also receive the SABE/2 Home Report. Spanish-language versions of the different reports are available to assist school districts in communicating the results to parents and guardians.

### STAR Student Report

The individual STAR Student Report provides overall scale scores, performance levels, and reporting cluster results for each CST. Overall scores are reported on a scale ranging from 150 to 600. Results for the CSTs also are reported by performance levels: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, or far below basic. Each performance level indicates how well a student is achieving the state academic standards tested. The state target is for all students to attain the proficient or advanced level on the CSTs.

In addition, CST results are reported in clusters that describe how a student performs on a set of state academic standards. Reporting cluster

# Spotlight on STAR 2005

## STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) PROGRAM

### What Kinds of Score Reports Will Parents and Guardians Receive?

results compare an individual student's performance to that of students throughout California who scored at the proficient level. These scores are reported as lower, about the same, or higher than the comparison group.

A California Reading List Number is printed on the lower left side of the second page. This number ranges from 01 to 13+ and links the student score on the *CST in English-Language Arts* with a list of books at the appropriate difficulty level for the student. The list is available on the California Department of Education (CDE) Web site at <http://star.cde.ca.gov>.

For students in grades three and seven, the *CAT/6 Survey* scores for each subject area tested are reported as percentile ranks. The 50th percentile rank is the national average, and a score between the 40th and 60th percentiles is considered an average score. If a student scores at the 55th percentile, for example, this means the student scored as well as, or better than, 55 percent of the students in a national sample who took the same test in the same grade.

Reports for students with disabilities and English learners who use accommodations or modifications when taking the *CSTs* or *CAT/6 Survey* tests will include a notation about the test administration that indicates:

- Student used accommodations, or
- Student was tested with modifications

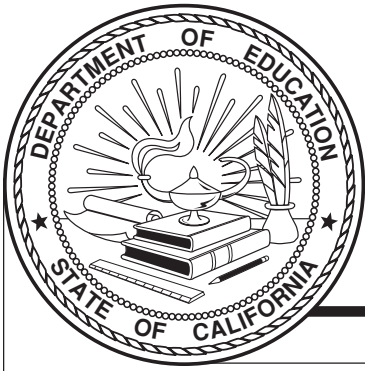
### STAR Student Report (*CAPA*)

The individual STAR Student Report (*CAPA* version) provides overall scale scores and performance level results for English-language arts and mathematics. Overall results for the *CAPA* are reported on a scale ranging from 15 to 60. Results also are reported by performance levels: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, or far below basic. Descriptions of the *CAPA* performance levels are provided on the student report. These descriptions correspond to the test level or grade span of the *CAPA* assessment administered to the student.

### *SABE/2* Home Report

The *SABE/2* Home Report, like the *CAT/6 Survey*, displays student scores as percentile ranks for each subject area tested. This test compares the scores of Spanish-speaking students to the scores of a national sample of Spanish-speaking students at the same grade level who took the tests.

If you have any questions about the California academic standards or STAR Program, please direct them to your child's teacher or school office.



# Spotlight on STAR 2005

STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) PROGRAM

## How Are STAR Program Results Used?

**T**he tests that make up the STAR Program provide results that are used for different purposes. Four major purposes include communicating with parents and guardians, informing decisions needed to support student achievement, evaluating school programs, and providing data for state and federal accountability programs for schools.

### Parent and Guardian Communications

First, STAR Program results provide parents and guardians with information about their children's progress. The results are a tool for increasing communication and collaboration between parents, guardians, and teachers. Along with teacher report cards and information from school and classroom tests, the STAR Student Report can be used by parents and guardians to talk with teachers about ways to improve their children's achievement of the California academic standards. Any discrepancies between report cards and the scores reported on the STAR Student Report also should be discussed.

### Student Support

Second, schools may use the STAR Program results to make decisions about how best to support student achievement. STAR Program results, however, should never be used as the only source of information to make important decisions about a student's education. STAR Program results can be used, along with other school and school district reports and teacher-generated information, to (1) make decisions about student promotion or retention and (2) identify students who may be eligible for special programs (i.e., Gifted and Talented Education Program [GATE], Title I, or intervention and remediation programs).

### Program Evaluation

Third, STAR Program results help school districts and schools identify strengths and weaknesses in their instructional programs. Each year, school district and school staffs thoroughly examine STAR Program test results for groups and individual students for each grade level and subject tested. Their findings are used to help determine:

# Spotlight on STAR 2005

## STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) PROGRAM

### How Are STAR Program Results Used?

- The extent to which students are learning the academic standards
- Instructional areas that can be improved for better student achievement
- Teaching strategies that can be developed to address needs of students
- Decisions about how to use funds to ensure that students achieve the standards

### Accountability

Fourth, the results are used for state and federal accountability programs that monitor each school's progress toward achieving established goals.

STAR Program results are used to calculate each school's Academic Performance Index (API). The API is a major component of California's Public School Accountability Act (PSAA) and is used to rank the academic performance of schools, compare schools with similar characteristics (e.g., size and ethnic makeup), identify low-performing and high-priority schools, and set yearly targets for academic growth.

STAR Program results also are used to comply with federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation that requires all schools to meet specific

academic goals. The progress of each school toward achieving these goals is provided annually in an Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) report. Each year, California schools must meet AYP goals by showing that a specified percentage of students, districtwide and at each school, are performing at or above the proficient level on the *California Standards Tests (CSTs) in English-Language Arts and Mathematics* and the *California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)*. At the high school level, the *California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE)* results for grade ten students are used in place of the CSTs to make this determination.

Clearly, the information provided on different STAR reports is very important for school districts and school administrators, teachers, and parents and guardians. By having more than one test, the STAR Program is able to provide the kind of results that are needed for these different purposes.

If you have any questions about the California academic standards or STAR Program, please direct them to your child's teacher or school office.



# STAR 2005: Program-at-a-Glance for Parents and Guardians

## Elementary School: Grades Two Through Five

Test Name	CSTs	CAPA	CAT/6 Survey	SABE/2
<b>Tested Students</b>	California Standards Tests (CSTs)	California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)	California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey)	Spanish Assessment of Basic Education, Second Edition (SABE/2)
<b>Tested Students</b>	All students in grades two through five	Students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the CSTs & CAT/6 Survey even with accommodations or modifications; participation must be specified in the IEP plan*	All students in grade three	Spanish-speaking English learners enrolled in California public schools less than 12 months; school district option for those enrolled for 12 months or more
<b>Student Test Exemption</b>	By parental or guardian request	By parental or guardian request	By parental or guardian request	By parental or guardian request
<b>Subjects Tested</b>	English-language arts Mathematics Written composition (grade four) Science (grade five)	English-language arts Mathematics Science, field test (grade five)	Reading Language Spelling Mathematics	Reading Language Spelling Mathematics Word analysis (grades two & three) Multiple choice
<b>Question Type(s)</b>	Multiple choice Writing task (grade four)	Performance tasks	Multiple choice	Multiple choice
<b>Language of Test</b>	English	English	English	Spanish
<b>Content Focus</b>	California academic standards	Subset of California academic standards	Basic academic knowledge and skills	Basic academic knowledge and skills in Spanish
<b>Report to Parents and Guardians</b>	STAR Student Report	STAR Student Report (CAPA version)	STAR Student Report	SABE/2 Home Report
<b>Types of Results on Report to Parents and Guardians</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scale scores (150 to 600)</li> <li>CST performance levels**</li> <li>Reporting cluster comparisons to student scores at the proficient level on the total test: lower, about the same, or higher</li> <li>California Reading List Number</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scale scores (15 to 60)</li> <li>CAPA performance levels**</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National percentile ranks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reference group percentile ranks</li> <li>Three achievement levels: below average, average, or above average</li> </ul>
<b>Results Received by Parents and Guardians</b>	Within 20 working days after school district receives them; no later than October 7, 2005	Within 20 working days after school district receives them; no later than October 7, 2005	Within 20 working days after school district receives them; no later than October 7, 2005	Within 20 working days after school district receives them; no later than October 7, 2005

\* Individualized education program

\*\* Performance levels reported are advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic. California's target for all students is to score at proficient or advanced.

# STAR 2005: Program-at-a-Glance for Parents and Guardians

## Middle School: Grades Six Through Eight

Test Name	CSTs	CAPA	CAT/6 Survey	SABE/2
<b>Tested Students</b>	California Standards Tests (CSTs)	California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)	California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey)	Spanish Assessment of Basic Education, Second Edition (SABE/2)
<b>Tested Students</b>	All students in grades six through eight	Students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the CSTs & CAT/6 Survey even with accommodations or modifications; participation must be specified in the IEP plan*	All students in grade seven	Spanish-speaking English learners enrolled in California public schools less than 12 months; school district option for those enrolled for 12 months or more
<b>Student Test Exemption</b>	By parental or guardian request	By parental or guardian request	By parental or guardian request	By parental or guardian request
<b>Subjects Tested</b>	English-language arts Mathematics Written composition (grade seven) History-social science (grade eight) NCLB science, field test (grade eight)	English-language arts Mathematics Science, field test (grade eight)	Reading Language Spelling Mathematics	Reading Language Spelling Mathematics
<b>Question Type(s)</b>	Multiple choice Writing task (grade seven)	Performance tasks	Multiple choice	Multiple choice
<b>Language of Test</b>	English	English	English	Spanish
<b>Content Focus</b>	California academic standards	Subset of California academic standards	Basic academic knowledge and skills	Basic academic knowledge and skills in Spanish
<b>Report to Parents and Guardians</b>	STAR Student Report	STAR Student Report (CAPA version)	STAR Student Report	SABE/2 Home Report
<b>Types of Results on Report to Parents and Guardians</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scale scores (150 to 600)</li> <li>CST performance levels**</li> <li>Reporting cluster comparisons to student scores at the proficient level on the total test: lower, about the same, or higher</li> <li>California Reading List Number</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scale scores (15 to 60)</li> <li>CAPA performance levels**</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National percentile ranks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reference group percentile ranks</li> <li>Three achievement levels: below average, average, or above average</li> </ul>
<b>Results Received by Parents and Guardians</b>	Within 20 working days after school district receives them; no later than October 7, 2005	Within 20 working days after school district receives them; no later than October 7, 2005	Within 20 working days after school district receives them; no later than October 7, 2005	Within 20 working days after school district receives them; no later than October 7, 2005

\* Individualized education program

\*\* Performance levels reported are advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic. California's target for all students is to score at proficient or advanced.

# STAR 2005: Program-at-a-Glance for Parents and Guardians

## High School: Grades Nine Through Eleven

Test Name	CSTs	CAPA	SABE/2
<b>Tested Students</b>	<p><i>California Standards Tests (CSTs)</i></p> <p>All students in grades nine through eleven</p>	<p><i>California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)</i></p> <p>Students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the CSTs &amp; CAT/6 Survey even with accommodations or modifications; participation must be specified in the IEP plan*</p>	<p><i>Spanish Assessment of Basic Education, Second Edition (SABE/2)</i></p> <p>Spanish-speaking English learners enrolled in California public schools less than 12 months; school district option for those enrolled for 12 months or more</p>
<b>Student Test Exemption</b>	By parental or guardian request	By parental or guardian request	By parental or guardian request
<b>Subjects Tested</b>	<p>English-language arts</p> <p>Mathematics</p> <p>Science</p> <p>NCLB Science, field test (grade ten)</p> <p>History-social science (grades ten and eleven)</p>	<p>English-language arts</p> <p>Mathematics</p> <p>Science, field test (grade ten)</p>	<p>Reading</p> <p>Language</p> <p>Spelling</p> <p>Mathematics</p>
<b>Question Type</b>	Multiple choice	Performance tasks	Multiple choice
<b>Language of Test</b>	English	English	Spanish
<b>Content Focus</b>	California academic standards	Subset of California academic standards	Basic academic knowledge and skills in Spanish
<b>Report to Parents and Guardians</b>	STAR Student Report	STAR Student Report (CAPA version)	SABE/2 Home Report
<b>Types of Results on Report to Parents and Guardians</b>	<p>■ Scale scores (150 to 600)</p> <p>■ CST performance levels**</p> <p>■ Reporting cluster comparisons to student scores at the proficient level on the total test: lower, about the same, or higher</p> <p>■ California Reading List Number</p>	<p>■ Scale scores (15 to 60)</p> <p>■ CAPA performance levels**</p>	<p>■ Reference group percentile ranks</p> <p>■ Three achievement levels: below average, average, or above average</p>
<b>Results Received by Parents and Guardians</b>	Within 20 working days after school district receives them; no later than October 7, 2005	Within 20 working days after school district receives them; no later than October 7, 2005	Within 20 working days after school district receives them; no later than October 7, 2005

\* Individualized education program

\*\* Performance levels reported are advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic. California's target for all students is to score at proficient or advanced.



# Sample Principal's Letter Before STAR Program Testing Begins

**(Insert Date)**

Dear Parents and Guardians:

This spring, your child, along with public school students throughout California, will participate in California's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program that includes four test components. Students at our school will take the tests on the following dates:

2005 STAR Program Tests	Administration Date(s)	Make-Up Date(s)
<i>California Standards Tests (CSTs)</i>  <i>Grade <b>(insert grade)</b> California Writing Standards Test</i>  <i>California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)</i>  <i>California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey) — Grade <b>(insert grade)</b></i>  <i>Spanish Assessment of Basic Education, Second Edition (SABE/2)</i>		

Most of our students will take the *California Standards Tests (CSTs)*. Students in grades three and seven also will take *California Achievement Tests, Sixth Edition Survey (CAT/6 Survey)*, which will be included in the same test booklet as the *CSTs*. Students with significant cognitive disabilities, who are unable to take the *CSTs* and the *CAT/6 Survey*, will take the *California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)*. The *CSTs*, *CAT/6 Survey*, and *CAPA* are given in English. Spanish-speaking students enrolled in California public schools less than 12 months also will take the *Spanish Assessment of Basic Education, Second Edition (SABE/2)*, that is given in Spanish.

Sample Principal's Letter Before  
STAR Program Testing Begins

Test results for both the *CSTs* and the *CAT/6 Survey* will be sent to each student's home address in one STAR Student Report by **(insert approximate date)**. The *CAPA* and *SABE/2* results will be sent in separate reports. Individual results are confidential and will be shared only with parents or guardians and students and their teachers.

STAR Program reports provide valuable information about your child's academic achievement. Please plan to keep these reports for use when talking with the teacher(s) about ways to support your child's academic progress.

Contact **(insert local contact information)** during regular school hours if you have questions about the STAR Program or the testing schedule.

# Sample Principal's Letter Before *CAPA* Testing Begins

**(Insert Date)**

Dear Parents and Guardians:

This spring, your child, along with public school students throughout California, will participate in California's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. Federal law requires all students to participate in this state-mandated testing program.

Your child's individualized education program (IEP) specifies that your child will participate in the STAR Program by taking the *California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)*, which will be administered on **(insert dates)**. The *CAPA* is a test that was specifically developed for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Test results will be provided in the STAR Student Report for *CAPA* that will be sent to your home address. These individual results are confidential and will be shared only with parents or guardians and the student's teacher.

The STAR Student Report for *CAPA* provides valuable information about your child's academic achievement. Please plan to keep these reports for use when talking with the teacher(s) about ways to support your child's academic progress.

Contact **(insert local contact information)** during regular school hours if you have questions about the STAR Program or the testing schedule.

## **You Can Help Your Children Do Better on Tests**

- Visit the school to find out how your children's classroom instruction addresses California's academic standards.
- Attend parent/guardian-teacher conferences to find out how well your children are achieving and what they need to do to improve.
- Discuss with your children the importance of doing their best on daily assignments and tests.
- Ensure that your children have a quiet place to study and that they complete all homework assignments.
- Attend parent/guardian information meetings. Ask about the major tests given to students and other ways academic achievement is measured.
- Know when the major tests, such as tests in the STAR Program, will be given and find out what you can do to help make sure your children are prepared.
- Discuss upcoming tests with your children and try to reduce their pretest anxieties.
- Make sure your children attend school on testing days, get a good night's rest, and have breakfast before a big test.

## **To Find Out More**

You are encouraged to contact the school for additional information about your children's academic progress and the tests students are taking at your school. STAR Program information also is available on the California Department of Education Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr>.



# **Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program**

## **Helping Your Children Achieve**

**2005**

## Suggestions for Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians play a very important part in their children's education. Showing positive attitudes toward completing school assignments well and on time can positively affect your children's attitudes about learning. Research about how students learn shows that a great deal can be done at home to increase a student's academic performance.

One question you may have about the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program is, "How can I help my children do better on the tests?" The question really is, "How can I help my children do well in school?" What you do at home can make a very big difference in how well your children achieve in school.

## Most Important of All

Let your children know how important their work at school is and how interested you are in what they are doing. Talk with them every day about:

- What they did at school
- What homework must be finished for the next day
- What needs to be done on a future project

Suggestions for helping your children in reading, writing, mathematics, and other academic areas follow.

## In Reading and Writing

- Listen to your children read and read stories aloud to and/or with them.
- Talk about what you and your children are reading and words they do not understand.
- Have family time when you and your children read a newspaper, magazine, or book.
- Encourage your children to write—lists, notes, thank-you notes, requests, journals, recipes, short stories, etc.
- For writing assignments, talk with your children about what the assignment requires; help them list the points to cover. Take your children to the library or help them use the Internet if more information is needed.
- Set a limit on the amount of time your children watch television. Watch and discuss television programs with them whenever possible.

## In Mathematics

- Check with your children every day to make sure homework assignments are completed.
- Attend parent/guardian classes about mathematics to prepare for questions that your children might ask at home.

- Ask questions to show how mathematics is used to help solve the problems as you play games, watch television, or prepare to do a home project.
- Show your children how you use mathematics in what you do every day — cooking, shopping, home repairs, or when buying materials to use in crafts, sewing, building projects, etc.
- Help your children read charts or graphs in newspapers and magazines and read maps when going on a family trip. It's important to help your children apply what they are learning.

## In Other Academic Areas

Other academic areas, such as science and history, challenge students to use reading and mathematics skills along with their knowledge about the subject. As your children read about a subject, ask them to tell you about it to reinforce their new knowledge and to use the new vocabulary they learned.

Share your interest in any academic area because children become interested in what is discussed at home. Family trips to museums, special television programs, news about a recent scientific discovery, or important world and local events should be shared and discussed. At times, let your children take the lead in talking about topics of interest to them.

